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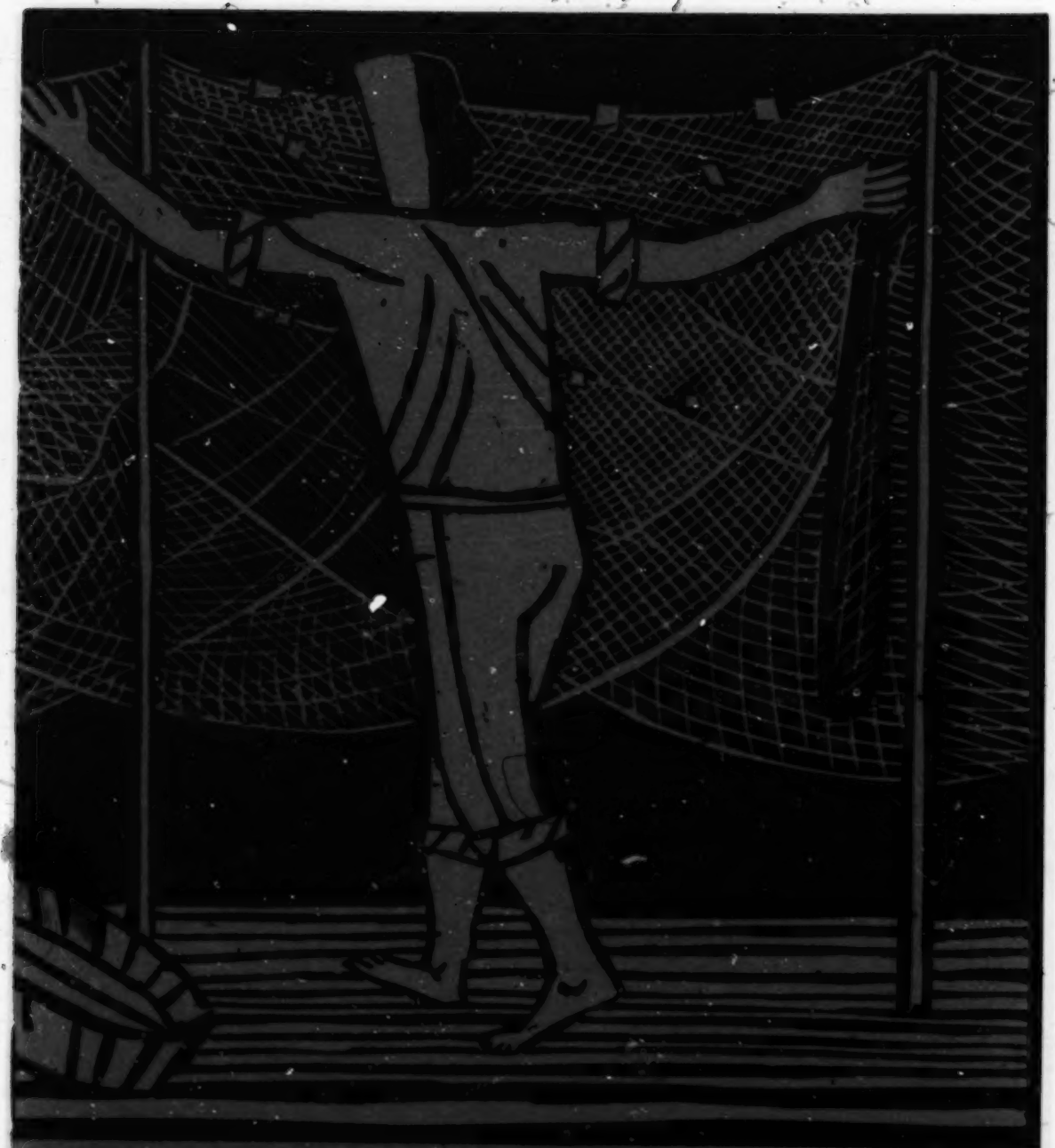

Gerhard Marcks

Gerhard Marcks

An Exhibition of Sculpture
with Drawings and Woodcuts

The Arts Council 1954

Foreword

This exhibition of the sculpture and graphic art of Gerhard Marcks is the first which the Arts Council has received from Germany under the official sponsorship of the German Federal Republic. By happy chance the arrival of this exhibition has coincided with the paving of the garden at 4 St James's Square, which will provide additional space to the Arts Council gallery and will enable some of the sculpture to be shown out of doors in the changing light which adds so much to the vitality of the sculptor's art. In Germany where sculpture has shown less tendency than elsewhere to abandon representation, the three great figures are Barlach, Lehmbruck, and Marcks. The work of the two former has occasionally been seen of recent years in this country, but Marcks will come as a new name to many and as what Dr Reidemeister, in his interesting introduction, calls 'a golden mean' between the two poles of Barlach's and Lehmbruch's expressionism.

The Council is most grateful to His Excellency Herr Dr Hans Schlange-Schoeningen, German Ambassador in London, for his special interest in the exhibition, to Dr Eugen Gürster, Cultural Attaché to the German Diplomatic Mission in London, through whose initiative it was specially planned for this country, and to Dr Ernst Thiele, Secretary-General of the Deutscher Kunstrat, who has been the organizer in Germany. Our thanks are also due to the owners whose names are given in the catalogue, and to Dr Leopold Reidemeister, Director-General of the museums in Cologne who has written the introduction.

PHILIP JAMES

Introduction

Looked at from Rome and Paris German art, and thus German sculpture, has always been open to the charge of tending towards distortion and intensification of expression – from the unknown master of the Bamberg choir screen onward to the Upper Rhenish master H.L. and to the sculpture of the Bavarian rococo. Naturally, this charge was levelled in particular against German expressionism which – in contrast to naturalism and impressionism – adopted this intensification of expression as its creed. And it is not wrong to say that in the twentieth century amongst the generation that set the pace in Germany the most impressive works of sculpture were achieved at the extreme poles of this branch of art. These poles are indicated by the names of Ernst Barlach (1870–1938) and Wilhelm Lehmbruck (1881–1919): Barlach, a native of North Germany, a recluse at his adopted North German home in Mecklenburg, was decisively influenced by the East and to him Paris and Florence meant nothing; he was master of the cloaked human form, disciple of the Gothic style and God-seeker. At the other extreme was the Rhinelander Lehmbruck whom Paris stimulated in his work and in whom the great heritage of the antique world, embodied in the human nude, renewed itself through a personal lyricism overshadowed by melancholia. It is characteristic that Barlach's dialect is only rarely understood beyond the German frontiers while Lehmbruck's language, formed by Southern and Western influence, is felt to be European.

Compared with these two the sixty-five year old Gerhard Marcks, whose work the present exhibition shows for the first time in England, represents the golden mean – in every respect. Marcks was born in Berlin; the Baltic coast became his second home, and after the war he found a sphere of work in Hamburg; he has now settled in Cologne, devoted entirely to his work. In choosing Cologne for his abode he was guided not only by the fact that there he is free from the obligations of teaching but also because he wanted to be 'closer to the vineyards'. The soil here, rich in Roman tradition, gives him strength, and when he travels from Cologne it is the Mediterranean, Greece, Italy and Spain,

which attract him. There is plenty of the Northerner's reserve and of his addiction to problems in Marcks' character. He represents a blend between the intellectual concepts of Barlach and Lehmbruck and has made their artistic heritage his own, not, to be sure, by eclecticism but in a creative synthesis. His artistic development reflects the cool spiritual concentration of the Berliner Johann Gottfried Schadow (1764–1850); there is not a sculptor in Germany today with a stronger sense of duty towards tradition, so that nothing may be forfeited of the achievements of those who went before him.

The range of his work is wide. As a student of August Gaul he was drawn to animal sculpture; in this field alone he would have found ample work and success. Gerhard Marcks has given us magnificent animal sculptures in which the landscape, the environment of these animals, also seems to come to life. But the task which he had set himself demanded more: the sculpting of human life.

Since his expressionist beginnings at the Bauhaus in Weimar he has focused his attention on the sculptor's immortal theme, man and woman, single and grouped, clothed and nude; he is concerned with solemn statuary expression as much as with intimate feeling, with the serious as much as with the cheerful and burlesque; the antique as well as the Christian heritage are alive in Marcks. But however wide the range of his work may be, the stamp which his sculptures bear is unmistakably his own: reserve, tact and inwardness rather than loud pathos, sweeping gesture and stress on muscular beauty, all of which are alien to his character. In Gerhard Marcks Germany sends not a virtuoso but a humane artist venerated by the younger generation.

LEOPOLD REIDEMEISTER

Plate 1 **Venus and Cupid** (30)

Plate 2 **Prometheus in Chains** (10)

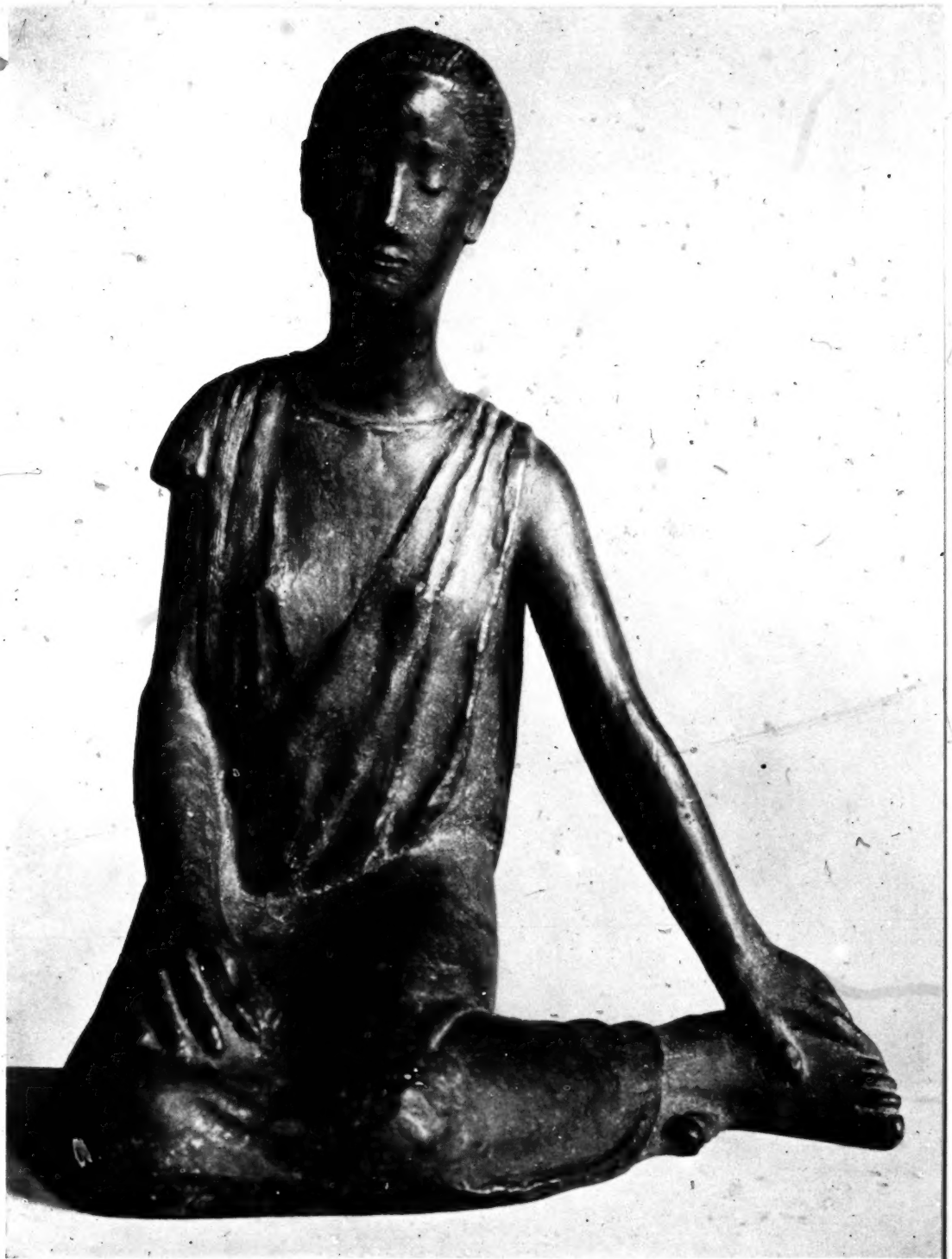

Plate 3 **Cenerentola** (1)

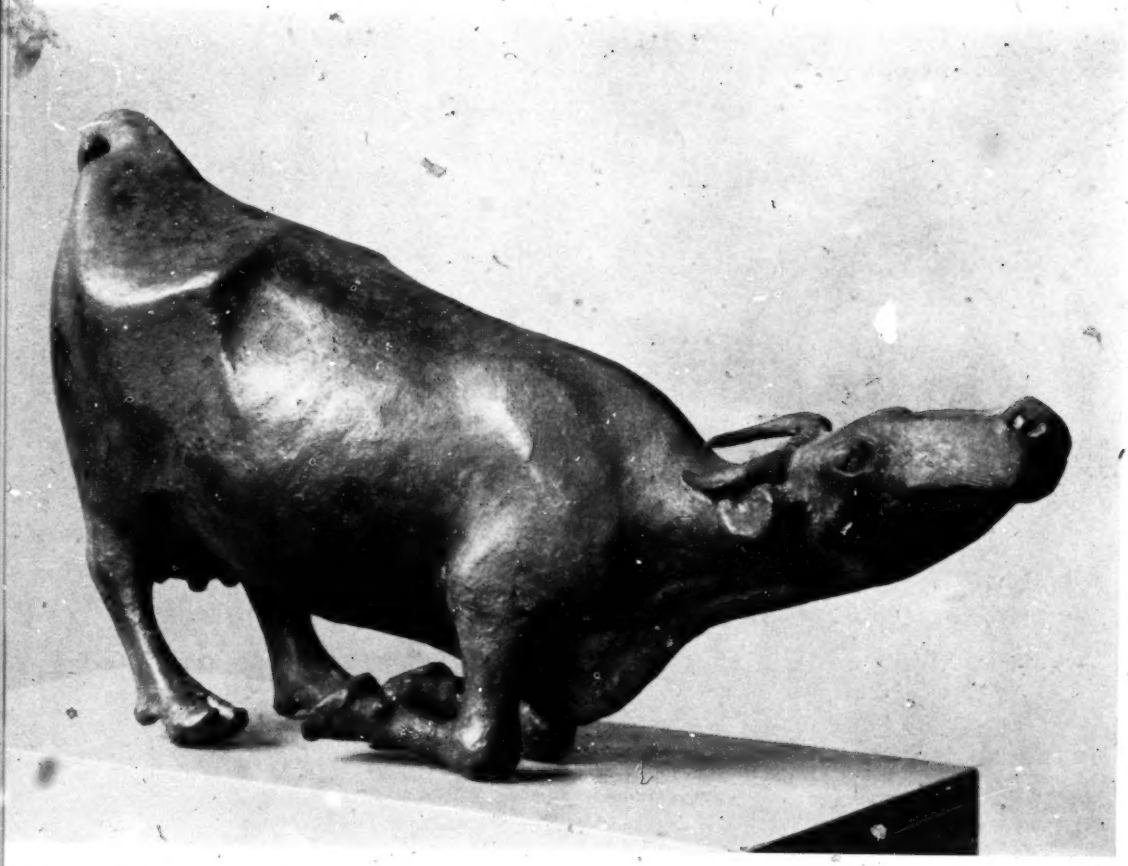

Plate 4 **Kneeling Cow** (20)

Biographical Data

18 February 1889: Born in Berlin.
Introduced to the art of sculpture by August Gaul and Georg Kolbe.
From 1907: Pupil of Richard Scheibe.

1918–19	Teacher of sculpture at the Berlin School of Arts and Crafts, directed by Bruno Paul.
1920–5	Called to the Bauhaus at Weimar by Walter Gropius. Contact with expressionism.
1921–33	Head of the Bauhaus pottery workshop at Dornburg Castle.
1925	Teacher at the arts and crafts workshop of the city of Halle at Giebichenstein Castle.
1927	Animal figures at the Cröllwitz bridge in Halle, and monument to Karl Ernst Osthaus at the Folkwang Museum in Essen.
1933–45	Free-lance sculptor in Berlin and Niehagen on the Baltic Sea.
1946–50	Professor at the Land Hamburg School of Arts.
1946–9	Funeral monument 'Die Trauernde' (Mourning Woman) for Cologne.
1947	Continuation of Barlach's row of figures on the gable of St Catherine's Church in Luebeck.
1948–51	Funeral monument for Hamburg.
since 1950	Free-lance artist in Cologne.
1952	Angel of Death monument for Mannheim.

Catalogue

SCULPTURE

Works are lent by the Galerie Rudolf Hoffmann, Hamburg except where otherwise stated.

All works in bronze, unless otherwise stated

1 **Cenerentola** (*Plate* 3) 1941 15¾ in. height
2 **Bust of Scheibe** 1942 11 13/16 in. height
3 **Eve** 1943–7 64½ in. height
4 **Grandmother and Grand-daughter** 1944 14 9/16 in. height
5 **Seated woman, with legs crossed** 1945 26¾ in. height
6 **Shepherd** 1945 16⅛ in. height
7 **Cossack horseman** 1945 11¾ in. height
8 **Standing youth** 1945–50 46 in. height
Lent by the Norddeutschen Bank, Hamburg
9 **Melusine II, seated** 1947 17 5/16 in. height
10 **Prometheus in chains** (*Plate* 2) 1948 31⅛ in. height
11 **Girl with folded arms** *Terracotta* 1948 15¾ in. height
12 **Orion** 1948 33⅞ in. height
13 **Amazon** 1948 25 9/16 in. height
14 **Girl with wreath** 1948 33⅞ in. height
15 **Prophet** *Terracotta* 1948 78¾ in. height
16 **Mother and child** *Terracotta* 1948 78¾ in. height
17 **Spanish Fisherman** 1949 22 13/16 in. height
18 **Standing boy** 1949 22 7/16 in. height
19 **Freya** 1949 67 in. height
20 **Kneeling cow** (*Plate* 4) 1949 10⅞ in. height, 18⅞ in. length
21 **Spanish Bull** 1950 5⅞ in. height, 11 in. length
22 **Standing Horse** 1950 16 9/16 in. height, 17 5/16 in. length
23 **Girl with plaited hair** 1950 45¼ in. height
Lent by the Town Museum, Bochum
24 **Negro trumpeter** 1950 11 7/16 in. height
25 **Portrait of Ute** *Marble* 1950 11 in. height
26 **Girls reading** 1950 23⅝ in. height
Lent by the Town Museum, Wuppertal
27 **Maya** 1951 44⅛ in. height
Lent by the Town Museum, Bielefeld
28 **Theres** 1951 26½ in. height
29 **Seated boy** 1952 10½ in. height
30 **Venus and Cupid** (*Plate* 1) 1952 32 5/16 in. height
31 **Cock in the rain** 1952 9 7/16 in. height, 18⅛ in. length

32 **Portrait of Heuss, II** 1952 11 13/16 in. height
33 **Girl running on the shore** 1953 24 13/16 in. height
34 **Gisela** 1954 84 5/8 in. height
35 **Bavarian peasant dancers** 1954 21 1/2 in. height
36 **Buffalo** 1954

DRAWINGS

Nos. 37, 46–51, 54–66 *are the property of the artist.*

37 **Youth, seated** 1941 Pencil
38 **Standing woman, with folded arms** 1941 Pencil
39 **Standing woman** Pencil
40 **Standing woman, with hands on the head** Pencil
41 **Standing woman, hand on hip** Pencil
42 **Standing woman, with folded hands** Pencil
43 **Standing youth** Pencil
44 **Standing youth with arm bent** Pencil
45 **Boy, walking** Pencil
46 **Seated youth with one foot drawn up** 1942 Pencil
47 **Ute** 1944 Pencil
48 **Koch-Gotha** 1946 Pencil
49 **Reclining woman** 1947 Pencil
50 **Girl bending forward** 1947 Pencil
51 **Draped figure, seated** 1947 Pen and wash
52 **Standing woman with long hair** 1947 Pencil
53 **Standing youth, with hand to head** 1947 Pencil
54 **Otto Lindig** 1948 Pencil
55 **Reclining boy** 1948 Pen
56 **Boy, seated** 1948 Pen and wash
57 **Reclining boy** 1948 Pen and wash
58 **Draped figure, in profile** 1949 Pencil
59 **Draped figure** 1949 Pencil
60 **Seated youth, his head on his hand** 1949 Pen and wash
61 **Standing female figure** 1949 Pencil
62 **Heuss (President of the Federal German Republic) I.** 1953 Pencil
63 **Heuss II.** 1953 Pencil
64 **Heuss III.** 1953 Pencil
65 **Margarete** 1953 Pencil
66 **Kuwo** 1953 Pencil

WOODCUTS

67 Old Man with spade 1945
68 Charon 1946
69 Refugees from the East 1947
70 The horseman 1947
71 Polish National Dance 1948
72 Young woman 1948
73 The team 1949
74 Bullfight I. 1949
75 Bullfight II. 1950
76 Bullfight III. 1950
77 Collapsing bull 1950
78 'Rustem' 1950
79 Fisherman with nets 1951
80 Bullock team II. 1951
81 'La Farucca' 1951
82 Winter sun 1953
83 Dove 1953

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Art is a veneration of the deity no less than any prayer, though in the case of art, it is the senses that offer the sacrifice. It is not the function of art to relieve those without faith from their boredom.

The sensation lies in the act of conception: he who puts it into the moment of creation must be suspected of straining after effects.

Every finished work of art amounts to a defeat. Yet, by its existence, that work conveys to the receptive spectator the artist's desire to come nearer to eternal truth. Thus it gives happiness; it 'edifies'. Any 'edifice', however, requires a sense of proportion. Lack of proportion is nothing but refined barbarism, whereas true proportion, so the ancients taught me, is also truly monumental.

GERHARD MARCKS

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